

Village of Salado
Salado Municipal Building
301 North Stagecoach Road
Salado, Texas
Minutes of Regular Meeting of Board of Aldermen
May 7, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

The Board of Aldermen meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Mayor Skip Blancett.

Mayor Blancett gave the invocation and the Board of Aldermen led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

Board Members Present: Mayor Skip Blancett, Mayor Pro-tem Frank Coachman, Aldermen Rodney Bell, Amber Preston Dankert, John Cole, and Michael Coggin. *(The meeting was conducted via videoconference.)*

Staff Present: Village Administrator Don Ferguson and City Secretary Cara McPartland

1. Citizens Communications

Mayor Blancett invited citizens to call in comments. No citizen comments were heard.

2. Consent Agenda

Approval of minutes of the Regular Board of Aldermen meeting of April 16, 2020.

Alderman Dankert moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Alderman Coggin seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

3. Village Administrator's Report

This item was heard after Agenda Item 5A.

- Wastewater Project Update

Village Administrator Ferguson reported connection activity has increased, as many plumbers are resuming their work with customers' initial connections. He advised contractors are planning to raise valve/manhole covers for the wastewater system due to sidewalk construction. He reported the Village is pursuing renewal of its discharge permit, with no changes to permit limits and no issues anticipated. He said the Village will be seeking bids for the Royal Street lift station odor control system at the end of this month.

- Main Street Improvement Project

Village Administrator Ferguson reported that sidewalks/curbs are being poured, work is being finished on some concrete drainage structures, light pole bases are being installed, and the Rock

Creek bridge railing is completed. He said the contractor is working with property owner(s) regarding ADA/access issues. He noted that paving may cause some traffic delays next week and re-vegetation along the construction route has begun. He advised the completion target date remains early this summer.

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Village Administrator Ferguson provided the latest Bell County information, including number of cases to date and anticipated plateau in early May. He cautioned that there may be potential spikes showing up at the end of next week due to some re-opening of the economy. He defined a spike as a report of 20 cases within a 24-hour period. He reported that Pace and Sirena Parks are open with COVID-19 signage and are subject to monitoring and possible closure should conditions warrant. He said the lower/pavilion areas of Pace Park are open, restrooms are closed, and no group reservations are being taken at this time for events prior to June. He noted that a handful of businesses have re-opened in Salado and expected more to open in the coming weeks, as capacity restrictions may be relaxed. He said the Village is working with the Chamber of Commerce on helping businesses re-open safely. He provided details from Governor Abbott's latest directive, including types of businesses allowed to re-open and safety protocols. He reported that Salado ISD is in the process of finalizing graduation ceremony plans and stated the Village is supportive of Salado ISD's efforts to recognize its graduates.

In addition, Village Administrator Ferguson reported there has been no response to date from Governor Abbott regarding the Village's letter requesting to hold its general election in July. He anticipated significantly decreased room tax revenues and said the Village continues COVID-19 preparedness efforts, including acquiring protective equipment/supplies, and sanitizing of facilities. He noted that the Municipal Building has remained open and will continue to do so, with no plans for service interruptions. To clarify misinformation circulating about the validity of the Board's actions taken prior to the November 3rd election, Village Administrator Ferguson explained statutes that allow sitting Board members to remain in office past the end of their terms, as full voting members, until a successor is duly chosen and seated. He stated that current office holders will hold over until the November 3rd election, and newly-elected office holders will serve shortened terms.

- Wastewater Bond Refunding

Village Administrator Ferguson reported that no bids have been received, as banks have been extremely busy dealing with various loan programs implemented for COVID-19 assistance. He said the Village plans to go out for bids again in the next 30-45 days.

- Salado Salamander Critical Habitat

Village Administrator Ferguson reported on a conference call among coalition parties and the Village's standing to submit a suggested reduced habitat boundary area. He noted that cost proposals are being sought to prepare a presentation to Fish & Wildlife on the proposed critical habitat boundary area. He advised there may be a benefit in partnering with Williamson County, as there is some evidence that the Salado Salamander habitat extends into its boundaries.

- **Street Repairs**

Village Administrator Ferguson reported repairs are scheduled for Salado Plaza Drive, including concrete/asphalt patching. He advised the Board will need to explore reconstruction of this street as a long-term solution and address heavy truck traffic impacting road conditions.

In addition, Village Administrator Ferguson reported that the May 2020 sales tax check, representing March sales, totaled \$44,669, down about 13 percent from the same period last year. He noted the impact of COVID-19 related business closures and Main Street construction on March collections. He reported that despite the decrease, the May 2020 check was the third highest May sales tax check received for the Village of Salado. He advised that fiscal year-to-date collections of \$359,851 are about the same as this time last year, representing 73 percent of budgeted sales tax revenue. He anticipated seeing more of an impact reflected in the Village's June check due to reduced business activity in April.

He reported that Sanctuary's developers have advised that single family residential site development has been put on hold until economic conditions improve and have notified the Village that an arrangement is being sought to begin development of some commercial portions of the project. He anticipated receiving a plat from developers within the next 30-60 days. He reported that Bear Rosamond's construction plans have been reviewed and zoning actions are planned for late May or early June.

Discussion addressed an early summer completion target date for the Main Street Improvement Project and celebration plans upon completion; possible re-scheduling of the previously approved laser light show from April to July/August; status of flagpole project; Salado Creek stepping stone project/timeframe/permitting/cost issues; complaints/citations issued for violating social distancing orders (no citations issued); moving forward with Smith Branch development; TxDOT plans to let the Thomas Arnold railing project; Salado Plaza Drive patching; and crowd monitoring.

4. Ordinance

Consider approval of an ordinance of the Board of Aldermen of the Village of Salado, Texas, prohibiting the parking of certain vehicles or trailers on public streets, alleys, parkways, boulevards and on private property zoned or used as residential within the corporate limits of the Village of Salado; repealing any ordinance in conflict therewith, providing for a penalty; providing a severability clause; providing for publication and providing an effective date.
(*Mayor Skip Blancett*)

Mayor Blancett referenced previous discussions on this issue and cited reasoning for the proposed ordinance, including vehicle/pedestrian safety concerns on narrow streets, negative effect on property values, and damage to Village roads from heavy truck traffic and costs of associated repairs. He emphasized the ordinance applies to large 18-wheeler type trucks, not standard sized pick-up trucks. Alderman Cole stated his support for the proposed ordinance. Alderman Dankert asked if the ordinance applied to driveway parking. Village Administrator Ferguson advised that the ordinance would prohibit parking of certain vehicles and trailers on any privately owned residentially zoned property. Mayor Pro-tem Coachman clarified the ordinance applies to large

commercial vehicles, not to boats, RVs, or ATVs. Village Administrator Ferguson listed the types of vehicles prohibited in the proposed ordinance. Alderman Coggin asked whether a 20-foot food truck parked in a residential driveway would be affected by this ordinance. Village Administrator Ferguson replied affirmatively.

Discussion addressed the number and type of complaints received and likely number of residents potentially impacted by the proposed ordinance. Alderman Coggin asked if there were deed restrictions against 18-wheelers and Village Administrator Ferguson reminded the Village does not enforce deed restrictions. It was noted by a complainant that the neighborhood's deed restrictions relating to large truck parking cannot or will not be enforced by the homeowner's association. In response to Alderman Bell's inquiry about enforcement, Village Administrator Ferguson explained various scenarios that would constitute a violation. In response to Alderman Coggin, Village Administrator Ferguson cited ordinance language stating the prohibition would not apply to commercial vehicles/trailers parked while providing delivery or services for the period necessary to complete the work. Alderman Coggin stated this ordinance reminds him of a past ordinance relating to RV parking that was approved, then repealed by the Board soon thereafter. Alderman Bell asked about the 10-passenger threshold included in the definition for "bus." Alderman Bell was concerned a large family with such a vehicle might be impacted by this ordinance. Alderman Coggin asked if there are any church vans exceeding the 10-passenger capacity. Discussion established that parking on any non-residential property would not be prohibited under the proposed ordinance.

Alderman Cole moved to approve the ordinance, as presented. Alderman Bell seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 3-2. Aldermen Coggin and Dankert voted against.

5. Discussion and Possible Action

- A. Discuss and consider possible action regarding the appointment of a member to the Village of Salado Economic Development Advisory Board. (*Village Administrator*)

This item was heard after Agenda Item 2.

Village Administrator Ferguson introduced Bruce Gordon, who submitted an application to serve on the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB). Mr. Gordon highlighted his background, qualifications, and experience in business, the military, and local government service. Mr. Gordon spoke regarding his interest in helping Salado grow with a good structure in place; economic growth challenges similar to other small cities; status of EDAB as a newly created advisory body; development on the west side of IH-35; and growth opportunities in the Salado area.

Alderman Coggin moved to approve the appointment of Bruce Gordon to the EDAB. Alderman Cole seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

- B. Discuss and consider possible action regarding a proposed support program for businesses in Salado impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson reviewed previous Board discussion and presented a proposed support program for local COVID-impacted businesses that partners with the McLennan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to establish a small business resource center, with operations to be initiated by the Village of Salado and later transitioned to the Salado Chamber of Commerce. He explained that the Village would provide office space for the SBDC counselor to meet weekly with business owners who have scheduled appointments on a wide range of topics such as how to start a business, preparing strategic business plans, assistance with financial projections, records/bookkeeping, credit counseling, improving/growing businesses, marketing, and social media. He pointed out there would be no cost to the Village, the Chamber of Commerce, or the business owner associated with the resource center.

The proposal included a sales tax refund program, which would refund the Village's share of sales taxes paid during March and April, with an estimated payout of around \$50,000 to businesses to help with items such as rent, utility bills, and certain other expenses. Village Administrator Ferguson also proposed waivers of any Village late fees for Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) or wastewater service bills, for a specific period of time (possibly until June or July). In addition, he proposed waiving building permit fees for any commercial building improvements at this time.

Discussion addressed the confidential nature of the resource center counseling, which would be conducted in a private one-on-one setting; general informational presentations for groups; concerns regarding waivers for late wastewater service payments and effect on taxpayers who help fund debt payments, and setting time parameters to address those concerns; general agreement with sales tax refund as it benefits the community via reinvestment; concurrence on waiving building permit fees; manageable impact on Village budget of approximately \$50,000 in sales tax refunds; and pursuit of available grant/stimulus funding, particularly funds earmarked for smaller cities; and identification/prioritization of projects, should funding become available. Based on concerns expressed in tonight's discussion, Village Administrator Ferguson stated that late fee waivers can be deleted, if the Board so desires. He said the business resource center, sales tax refund, and the commercial building permit fee waiver would remain as components of the program.

Alderman Coggin moved to proceed as discussed, in accordance with Village Administrator Ferguson's abovementioned comments to delete the late fee waivers, but include the remaining program components. Alderman Bell seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

C. Discuss and consider possible action regarding the continued use of the virtual meeting format for Salado Board of Aldermen meetings. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson asked for Board direction on the continuation of the virtual meeting format. He recommended incorporating more public input using Zoom even if meetings are held in person. He felt confident that social distancing will be strongly encouraged in the coming weeks and cited certain accommodations to facilitate such distancing. Alderman Cole favored virtual meetings for the foreseeable near future. Alderman Dankert asked if the Board can revisit this item on future agendas for the first meeting of every month. Alderman Coggin said that virtual meetings are effective, but felt there needs to be an improvement to public input and comments. Village Administrator Ferguson spoke of various options, such as use of certain Zoom

features and submission of citizen comments prior to the meeting to be circulated to the Board and read into the record. He replied affirmatively to Alderman Cole's question regarding encouragement of public input through publication of information in the local newspaper about meeting participation.

Alderman Cole moved to revisit this item, per Alderman Dankert's aforementioned suggestion, on the Board's agenda for its first meeting of each month, and continue with virtual meetings until further notice. Alderman Coggin seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

- D. Discuss and consider possible action regarding a proposal to utilize a sole authorized provider for residential and commercial solid waste and recycling services. (*Mayor Skip Blancett*)

Mayor Blancett spoke about prior discussions on the negative impact of large garbage trucks that damage Village streets and roads. He said those discussions included the possibility that having one combined route of a single solid waste service provider would save street maintenance costs for the Village. He asked if the Board would entertain discussion.

Alderman Cole felt that one provider would double his truck traffic and there would not be a benefit to the Village. He favored no action. Alderman Coggin asked if there has been any citizen input on this issue. Village Administrator Ferguson replied that several emails opposing any change to the current system were received and forwarded to the Board prior to this meeting.

Alderman Cole moved to *not* approve a proposal to utilize a sole authorized solid waste/recycling provider. Alderman Coggin seconded. After clarification on motion language to "disapprove" this item, motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

- E. Discuss and consider issues relating to the potential future expansion of the Village of Salado Wastewater System. (*Village Administrator; no action will be taken on this item*)

Village Administrator Ferguson advised that there are leftover bond funds of about \$711,000 from the wastewater project, with \$138,000 of those funds obligated for specific projects. He said that the remainder may be used for debt service reduction or for expansion of the existing system, or for a combination of these options. He provided some cost estimates for various expansion projects, including:

- \$284,000 – IH-35 west side extension; low pressure line to service properties from Sonic to Robertson's
- \$1,400,000 – IH-35 east side extension; combination force main/gravity line to Holiday Inn from the Salado Library, including all properties in between, except for Hidden Glen
- \$75,000 – extension to Brookshire Brothers, Salado Plaza, Salado Plaza Drive (offices/possibly Salado Water Supply Corporation/some residences across from Salado Plaza center)
- \$129,000 – Rock Creek extension; low pressure line to serve those businesses on the north side of Rock Creek (Barton House already connected)

- \$71,000 – low pressure line with grinder pump to Salado Library only
- \$135,000 – gravity line extension to Salado Library only (higher cost due to traversing intersection)

He noted that with low pressure extensions, there would be grinder pump costs involved, many of which would be the more expensive duplex pumps. He advised the Board may choose to provide such pumps, as was the case within the initial service area, or have the property owner be responsible for grinder pump costs.

Should the Board wish to explore expanding treatment plant capacity, Village Administrator Ferguson stated the current plant could be expanded up to 300,000 gallons per day at a cost of about \$1,000,000. He noted that impact fees from pending developments can be used toward plant expansion.

Discussion addressed various cost-sharing options among businesses and the Village; businesses expressing interest in connecting to the wastewater system; annexation of areas where service would be extended, which adds taxable value to tax rolls; additional user revenue from new customers to lessen burden on existing tax base and help with operations and maintenance costs; direction of Board on impact fee assessment; system expansion versus debt reduction or a combination of both options; possible right-of-way acquisitions; positive long-term impact of extending service to new developments, including increased taxable value and system user revenue, lessening burden on taxpayers and users; use of bond funds to purchase additional land for future expanded treatment plant; break-out of costs of individual projects; opportunities for negotiations with individual property owners regarding cost-sharing partnerships and impact fees; and additional cost estimate to run low pressure line to FM 2484. Discussion favored further exploration of land acquisition, extension of service to Brookshire Brothers/Salado Plaza Drive, the Salado Public Library, Sonic, and Robertson's for future Board consideration.

Addendum to Agenda

5. Discussion and Possible Action

- F. Discuss and consider possible action relating to the fiscal impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the Village of Salado. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson reviewed past discussion and asked for input from the Board on possible options to address the financial impact of COVID-19. Discussion included: reduced overtime expenses; 10 percent across-the-board cut in expenses; savings through privatization of services (such as public works); use of undesignated fund balance(s) for one-time critical project(s); negotiating lease agreements for delayed payment on police vehicles; personnel/service levels; reduction of employee hours/workforce; availability of possible federal stimulus funding for certain capital projects; existing staff multi-tasking; and prioritization of capital projects for future Board consideration.

Adjournment

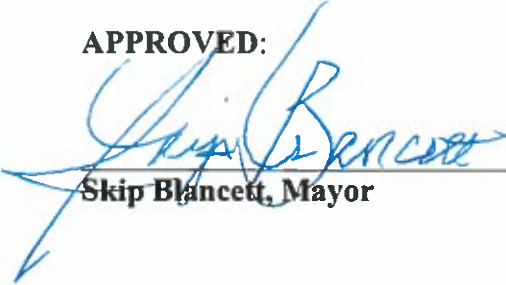
Alderman Coggin moved to adjourn. Alderman Bell seconded. Mayor Blancett called the meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Recorded by:

Cara McPartland

These minutes approved on the 21st of May, 2020.

APPROVED:


Skip Blancett, Mayor

ATTEST:


Cara McPartland, City Secretary

